

Congressman Elijah E. Cummings

January 29, 2004

7th Congressional District of Maryland
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A message from Congressman Elijah E. Cummings



It is both a privilege and honor to represent you in the United States Congress. While serving you, I will continue outreach efforts to further inform you of legislative action in Congress. I welcome your advice. Government "by the people" is the cornerstone of my legislative philosophy.

*Elijah E. Cummings
Member of Congress*

On the Internet:
<http://www.house.gov/cummings>

Congressman Cummings Responds to State of the Union

Following President Bush's third State of the Union address on Jan. 20, Congressman Cummings expressed concern as to whether the President would fulfill the promises made in the address.

"As citizens of the greatest nation on earth, each of us was left to answer for ourselves: What, truly, is the state of our union?," Congressman Cummings said.

He pointed out various discrepancies in President Bush's promises in addressing the economy, healthcare, education and national security.

Economy: "Although President Bush asserted that his massive tax cuts have created jobs, he failed to mention that since he took office, more than 2 million jobs have been lost," Congressman Cummings said. Currently, a total of 9 million Americans are looking for work, including 120,000 people in Maryland.

"To make up for the total jobs lost, there would have to be almost 167,000 jobs created every month from now until January 2005," Congressman Cummings said. "But in December, only 1,000 jobs were created nationwide. At this rate, it would take nearly 193 years to catch up to the amount of jobs lost since President Bush was sworn into office."

Healthcare: Congressman Cummings gave credit to President Bush for discussing healthcare during the State of the Union address.

"It was appropriate to address the fact that more than 43 million Americans now lack health insurance," Congressman Cummings said. "What the President did not reveal is that more than 2.4 million Americans have lost their health insurance since President Bush was sworn into office in 2001."

Congressman Cummings added, "Tax credits for health insurance are worth considering, but they will not solve the problem of families who are unable to pay skyrocketing health insurance premiums in the first place. Americans need and deserve universal access to affordable, high quality health care."

Education: "During the State of the Union, President Bush spoke about the national mission to uplift every child through the power of education. However, in the two years since President Bush's landmark *No Child Left Behind* legislation was passed, the initiative has been underfunded by almost \$17 billion," Congressman Cummings observed.

National Security: Congressman Cummings noted that in last year's State of the Union address, President Bush claimed that the main reason for going to war with Iraq would be to eliminate the weapons of mass destruction hidden there. However, to this date, no such weapons have been found.

As to homeland security, Congressman Cummings said, "Our cities, ports, rail lines and first responders have yet to receive the federal support they need and deserve to handle potential terrorist attacks."

Congressman Cummings referred to a report by the U.S. Conference of Mayors that revealed that 76 percent of U.S. cities have yet to receive federal funding allocated to them by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Entitled *Second Mayors' Report to the Nation: Tracking Homeland Security Funds Sent to the 50 State Governments*, the report found that cities do not have sufficient funds to assist first responders such as police, fire, and other local officials in the event of a terrorist attack.

Congressman Cummings Secures \$63 Million in Federal Funds for 7th District

President George W. Bush signed the Omnibus Appropriations Bill (H.R. 2673) into law on January 23. Residents of Howard County, Baltimore City and Baltimore County will benefit through the following earmarks:

Transportation:

\$40 million for the Baltimore Central Light Rail Double Track project;

\$4 million for the Maryland Statewide Job Access and Reverse Commute Transportation;

\$7.5 million for the Maryland Statewide buses and bus facility;

\$500,000 for Howard County to revitalize the Rt. 1 Corridor;

\$200,000 to the City of Baltimore's Intelligent Transportation Systems deployment projects;

\$200,000 for the City of Baltimore Maryland Traffic Congestion Management.

Child/Youth Services:

\$200,000 for the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners to develop alternative education centers for students;

\$100,000 for the Baltimore Child Abuse Center for building renovations.

Law Enforcement:

\$100,000 to the Baltimore City Police Department to install in-vehicle video cameras.

Healthcare:

\$2.2 million to Baltimore City for the Drug Enforcement and Eradication Program;

\$1 million for Baltimore City to expand drug treatment services;

\$200,000 for Sinai Hospital in Baltimore to renovate the hospital maternity facility.

Economic and Community Development

\$4 million for the Russell Street Viaduct Replacement project in Baltimore;

\$1 million to the East Baltimore Development Inc. for redevelopment activities in East Baltimore, which include coordination with the Oliver community redevelopment plan;

\$600,000 to the Baltimore Center Plaza ;

\$600,000 for the City of Baltimore Main Streets Initiative project;

\$500,000 to the B&O Railroad Museum in Baltimore for building renovations;

\$175,000 for the 20th Street H.O.P.E. House in Baltimore for facilities expansion and renovation (outreach programs for homeless individuals);

\$250,000 for the Great Blacks in Wax Museum's expansion project.



During his Howard County neighborhood office hours, Congressman Cummings listens to the concerns of constituent William Bryant. The office hours were held at the River Hill Giant Grocery store in Clarksville, Maryland, on January 24, 2004.

Congressman Cummings Denounces Alterations to Healthcare Data by U.S. HHS

On January 13, Congressman Cummings, joined by several of his colleagues, sent a letter to U.S. Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Tommy G. Thompson denouncing alterations to scientific evidence regarding healthcare disparities. In the letter, the Members protested against a report released by the HHS (called National Healthcare Disparities Report) because this report deleted information that clearly demonstrated inferior medical care received by minorities, even when they have the same income and insurance as their non-minority counterparts.

"This is yet another example of the Administration's manipulation of science to fit its political goals," said Congressman Henry A. Waxman (D-Calif.), Ranking Minority Member, Committee on Government Reform, and a close colleague of Congressman Cummings. "Rather than dedicate the resources necessary to eliminate the serious healthcare disparities in this country, HHS is pretending they don't exist."

Congressman Cummings added, "Just like a tumor cannot be healed by covering it with a bandage, healthcare disparities cannot be eliminated with misrepresented facts."

Congressman Cummings urged the Bush Administration to stand by its commitment to eliminating racially-defined healthcare disparities by 2010, a commitment originally made by the Clinton Administration.

"As recommended by the National Institute of Medicine in its 562-page report entitled *Unequal Treatment: Confronting Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care*, healthcare disparities can only be addressed by increasing access to healthcare, training healthcare workers to deal with a diverse group of patients, recruiting more minorities to work in healthcare, and other action-oriented initiatives," Congressman Cummings said. "Disparities do not disappear by concealing information."

The letter to Secretary Thompson was backed by a report prepared by the Special Investigations Division of the minority staff of the Committee on Government Reform, and is part of the Committee's continuing investigation into politics and science in the Bush Administration. The report, entitled *Changes to the National Healthcare Disparity Report: A Case Study in Politics and Science*, the letter to HHS, and the two versions of the *National Healthcare Disparities Report* executive summary are available online at www.politicsandscience.org.

Congressman Cummings and his colleagues plan to further investigate the alterations in the report and may also request a Congressional hearing.

Congressman Cummings Celebrates Groundbreaking of UMB BioPark

Congressman Cummings joined officials from the University of Maryland-Baltimore (UMB) and other community leaders to break ground on a new biotechnology development called UMB BioPark.

The park is located west of Martin Luther King Boulevard, along the north side of the 800 and 900 blocks of West Baltimore Street. Once completed, the park is expected to contain approximately 800,000 square feet of space for research labs, offices, parking, pedestrian walkways, and greenery. The first building, slated for occupancy by December of this year, will feature 120,000 square feet of office and lab space and be occupied by nearly 300 employees.

"We build a building today so that we can be in the business of rebuilding lives," Congressman Cummings said at the groundbreaking ceremony.

The building is to be occupied by UMB, which will lease out some of its space to emerging biotechnology companies, as well as by the BioPark project's development team, headed by Townsend Capital LLC in Towson. Other primary development team members include Whiting-Turner Contracting Co. and Banks Contracting Co., a minority-owned firm.



Engineering students from Woodlawn High School demonstrate their robotics project to Congressman Cummings and their principal, Anthony Thompson, during a Martin Luther King International Day celebration in Baltimore County.

Congressman Cummings Celebrates the Opening of an Automotive Technology School

Congressman Cummings participated in the announcement of the opening of the Magna- Baltimore Technical Training Center to be located in the former Park Heights Elementary School at 4910 Park Heights Avenue. The president of Magna International, Frank Stronach; Baltimore Mayor Martin O'Malley; and other elected officials joined Congressman Cummings to celebrate this event.

Magna International is expanding its existing automotive training operation through the establishment of this center in the Park Heights community, which is their first training facility to be located in the United States.

In addition to positions in the automotive industry, graduates of the Magna-Baltimore Technical Training Center will be eligible for other technical fields that require similar skills.

"This center represents a true formula for success - by investing in the people of this community and providing them with the skills to become active participants in our workforce," Congressman Cummings noted.

Magna International will invest at least \$7 million to renovate the former Park Heights Elementary School. The 16,000 square foot facility will house some of the latest training technology in the automotive industry.

The training facility will be ready for its first class in September 2004. It will offer a tool-and-die program and a separate building maintenance program in partnership with Baltimore City Community College (BCCC).

Upon completion, students will earn certificates acknowledging they learned a trade and will be able to enter a two-year program and earn an associate degree from BCCC. The center will be able to accommodate approximately 100 students per year.

In addition to the training facility, Magna has also committed to restoring the adjacent recreation center, which will provide the surrounding community with an all-season center to be operated by the Baltimore Department of Recreation and Parks.

"Everyone involved in this project has taken a triumphant step in helping to rebuild our city, refuel our economy, and support those individuals who desire to live prosperous lives." Congressman Cummings said.

Howard County Outreach Centers

First Monday of the Month:

Glenwood Library, 2350 Route 97
Cocksville, MD 21723

Hours: 4:00PM - 6:00PM or by appointment

Second Monday of the Month:

Howard County Central Library
10375 Little Patuxent Pkwy.
Columbia, MD 21044

Hours: 4:00PM - 6:00PM or by appointment

Second Wednesday of the Month:

Savage Library, 9525 Durness Lane
Laurel, MD 20723

Hours: 4:00PM - 6:00PM or by appointment

Third Monday of the Month:

Florence Bain Senior Center
5470 Ruth Keeton Way
Columbia, MD 21044

Hours: 9:00AM - 11 AM or by appointment

Fourth Monday of the Month:

Miller Branch Library, 9421 Frederick Road
Ellicott City, MD 21042

Congressman Cummings' District Offices

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